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ABSTRACT

As reported in the document, the park and recreation profession, a growing field, emphasizes involving people in meaningful leisure activities. This service profession offers varied career opportunities in the areas of public recreation, park management, conservation and outdoor recreation, and park and resource planning. Positions are also available with institutional, private, and cultural arts organizations; voluntary youth agencies; armed forces; commercial enterprises; recreation education institutions; and agencies for outdoor education and interpretive services. Salaries, advancement opportunities, and types of careers are discussed. It is noted that recreation and park administration curricula at most colleges and universities combine broad liberal educations with professional and technical studies essential for careers in specific areas of recreation. Examples of program options and specific courses are given, along with suggested high school preparation. Sources of information concerning programs and/or professions are listed. (AN)

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CAREERS IN PARKS AND RECREATION

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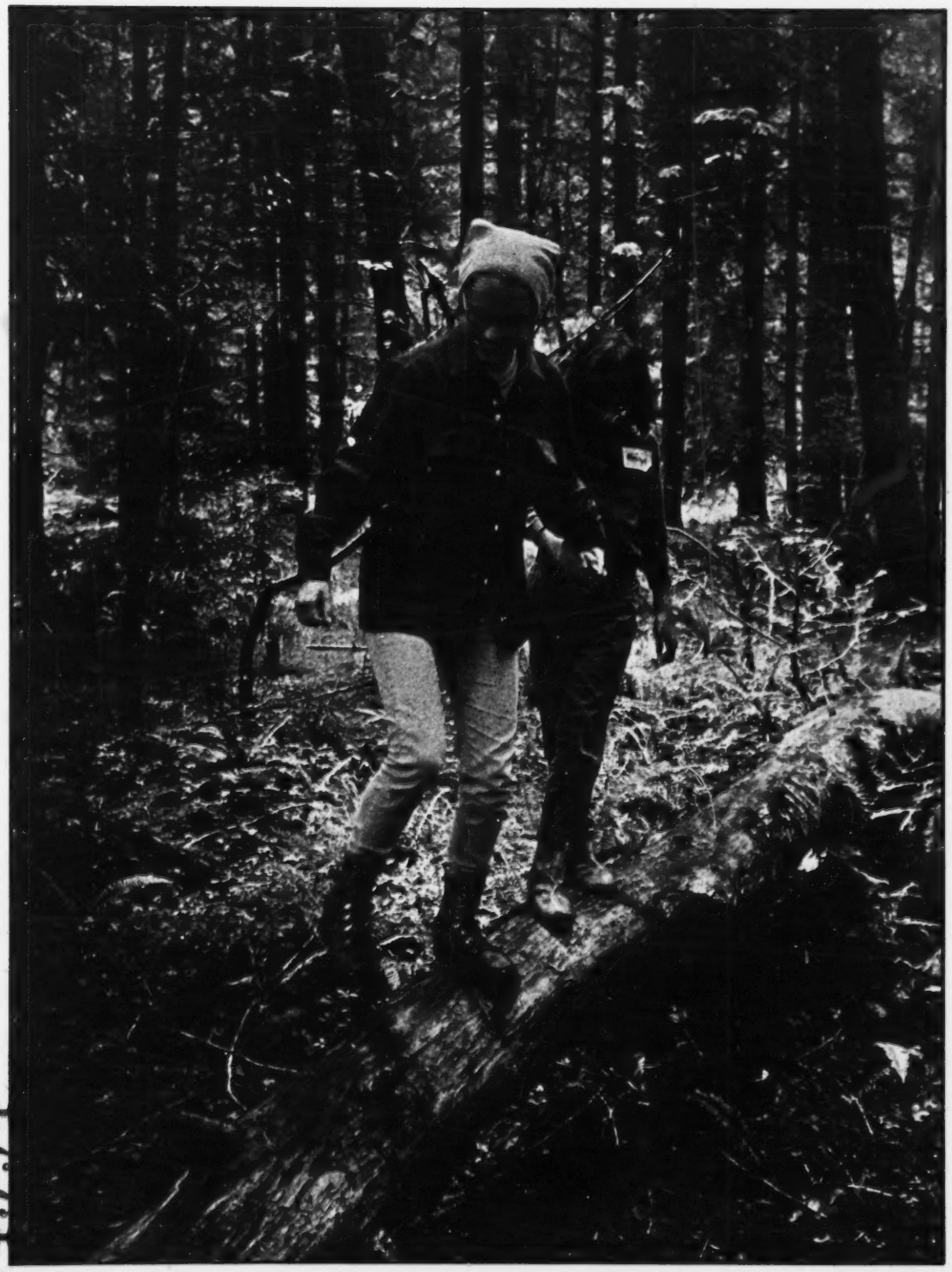

A publication of the
Oregon Park and Recreation Society
and the University of Oregon
Center of Leisure Study
and Community Service,

For college and university students, high school students, and counselors

RC004594

The real worth of recreation and park services is in healthier, happier, better-adjusted individuals.

Only leisure can rehabilitate the overstressed mechanism of the mind . . . But mere idleness is not the answer. The kind of leisure men need in a machine-age civilization is some spare-time task or occupation that calls on their intelligence and restores their self-respect, transforming them from cogs in a machine to men.

Sir Heneage Ogilvie, English Surgeon

For copies of this booklet, please contact

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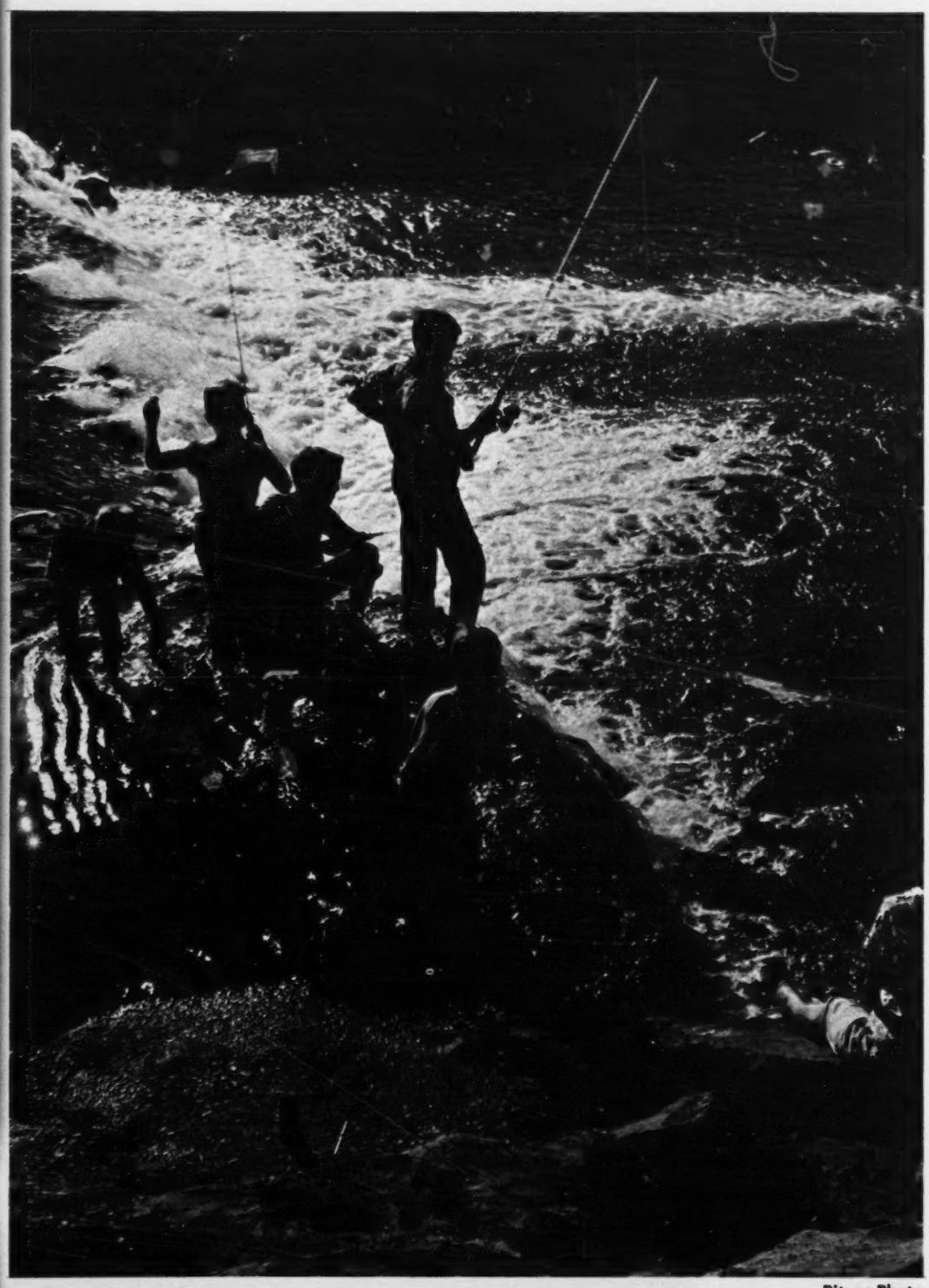

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RECREATION—A Growing Field

By contributing to the values which enrich people's lives, recreation is taking its place with education, work, and religion in serving the fundamental institutions of society.

Involving people in meaningful leisure activities is the emphasis of the park and recreation profession. Professional workers in this field help people in our highly specialized, mechanized society find means to express themselves and their interests. It is not the specific activity or the location that are important in recreation, but the attitudes, values, and habits derived from purposeful leisure activities. Much juvenile delinquency, unhappiness, and mental illness can be prevented or reduced by satisfying, creative use of leisure.

As people's incomes rise and their amount of leisure time increases, the demand for recreational resources and facilities also increases. People have the time and money to invest in recreational equipment, to travel to parks and resorts for hiking or fishing, to attend spectator sports events, take creative classes, or participate in arts festivals. Improvements in highways and public transportation have made recreation areas more accessible for vacations and weekend trips. Population growth has made conservation of natural resources and park development increasingly important. Recreation programs are becoming integral parts of correctional institutions, retirement residences, and rehabilitative centers.

Career Opportunities

Because the recreation, park, and conservation fields are growing so fast many professional career opportunities are open to men and women graduates in recreation and park management and youth leadership. Some positions call for skill in specific activities, such as directors of arts centers or youth camps. Others require ability to promote and organize well-balanced programs and city-wide events, to evaluate and acquire property, to develop and maintain land and facilities, and to train and supervise professional staff and volunteers. Those in top administrative positions may deal with recreation or park boards or commissions and with public and private authorities. Some are trustees of large sums of money and administrators of large facilities.

Employment Areas

A graduate in recreation leadership and park management may find employment in one of the following areas:

Public Recreation administration, supervision and leadership of programs sponsored by school districts, park and recreation districts, cities, counties, state park and recreation departments, and federal agencies such as the National Park Service, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and the Forest Service.

Park Management closely allied with recreation as a result of a growing trend in government to join park management agencies with recreation agencies, in cities, counties, and state park departments; includes primarily the development of the land and management of facilities and services within the park system.

Conservation and Outdoor Recreation concerned with the management, conservation, interpretation, and wise utilization of forests, wilderness areas, waterways, fish and wildlife. Some professionals are concerned with increasing problems of air and water pollution and encroachment of recreation land.

Park and Resource Planning responsible for conducting area investigations of potential park sites, preparing master and landscape plans, making site analysis, designing specialized facilities, conducting special studies, and developing a park information program.

Institutional park and recreation graduates work in churches, homes for the aged, hospitals, nursing homes, prisons and juvenile detention homes, schools for the physically handicapped or mentally retarded, or other private or public institutions. One of the major specialties of this category is the therapeutic recreation specialist who generally provides those recreation services which assist recovery or adjustment to illness, disability, or a specific social problem.

Private citizens and corporations often form organizations to provide recreation for themselves and their families and/or employees. Professionals employed by these organizations may manage golf courses, swimming pools, marinas, auditoriums, or other facilities.

Cultural Arts management and supervision of arts councils, centers, related areas.

Voluntary Youth Agencies scouts, boys' and girls' clubs, YM-YWCA's and other agencies which derive support from public and private membership. The staff may conduct programs for youth and adults, direct camps, train volunteers, etc.

Armed Forces direction of clubs, libraries, sports, hobby shops, and entertainment (such as, drama and music) for military personnel and their dependents.

Commercial includes the management of private enterprises such as theaters, amusement parks, resorts, sporting goods stores or camps, offering recreation or entertainment to the public for commercial profit.

Professional Recreation Education includes teaching, administration, research, and field extension in junior colleges, colleges, or universities. There are also opportunities on campuses for student union and student program management.

Outdoor Education and Interpretive Services often operated cooperatively by schools or park districts. Programs of outdoor education for the public are referred to as "interpretive services" and are under municipal, county, or state auspices. Naturalists in parks may direct nature centers, field trips and clubs, and prepare exhibits and displays.

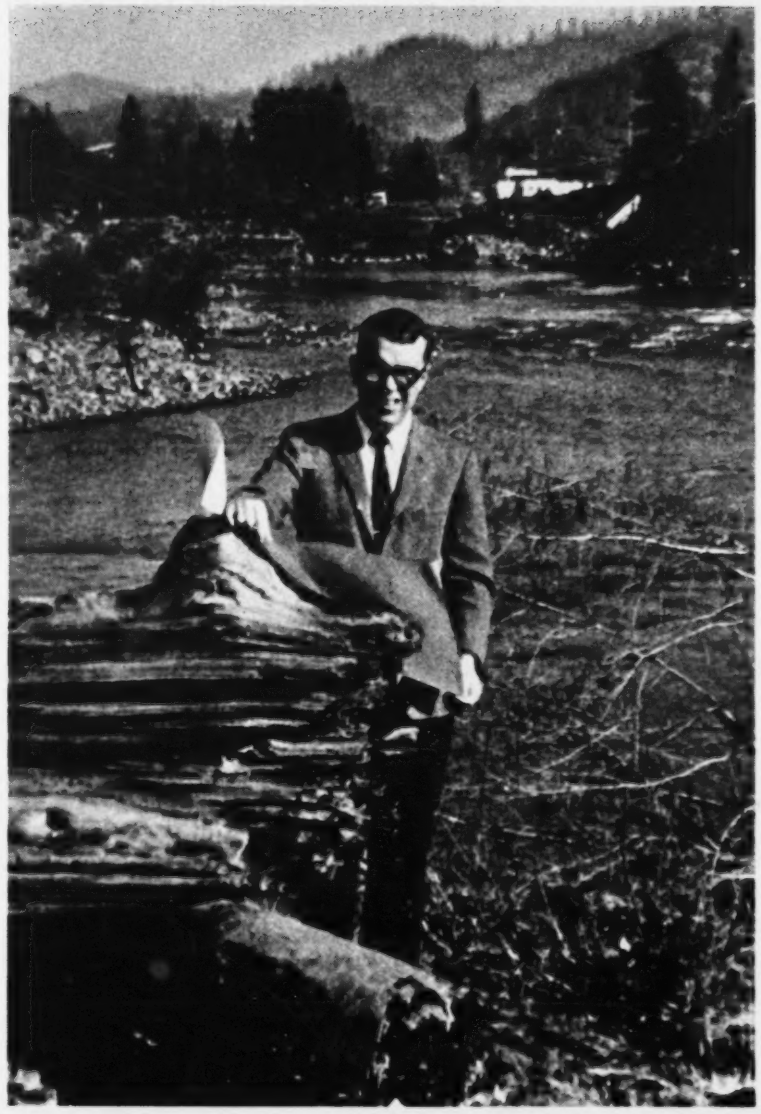
Advancement

Young people with bachelor's degrees in recreation can expect to begin their careers as recreation supervisors, program specialists, assistants to directors in park departments or agencies, or directors in smaller departments. Of course salaries differ depending on the responsibilities, size of staff, geographic location, and the individual's ability, education, and experience.

Starting salaries are often comparable with the salaries of beginning teachers. There is tremendous opportunities for rapid advancement for the qualified and professionally trained individual.

Examples of Careers

The variety of recreation careers open to young people is shown in these examples of professional recreationists employed in Oregon.

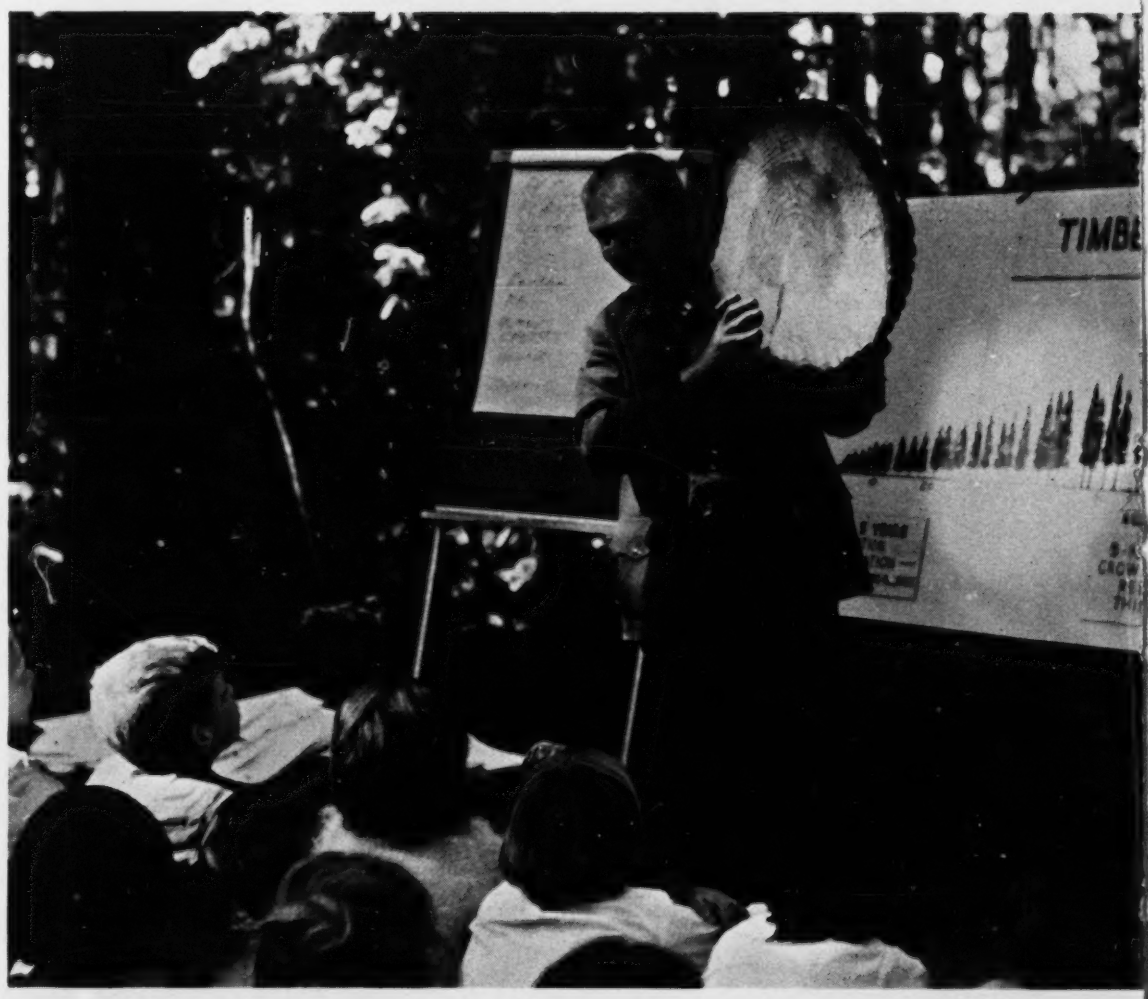


Public Recreation

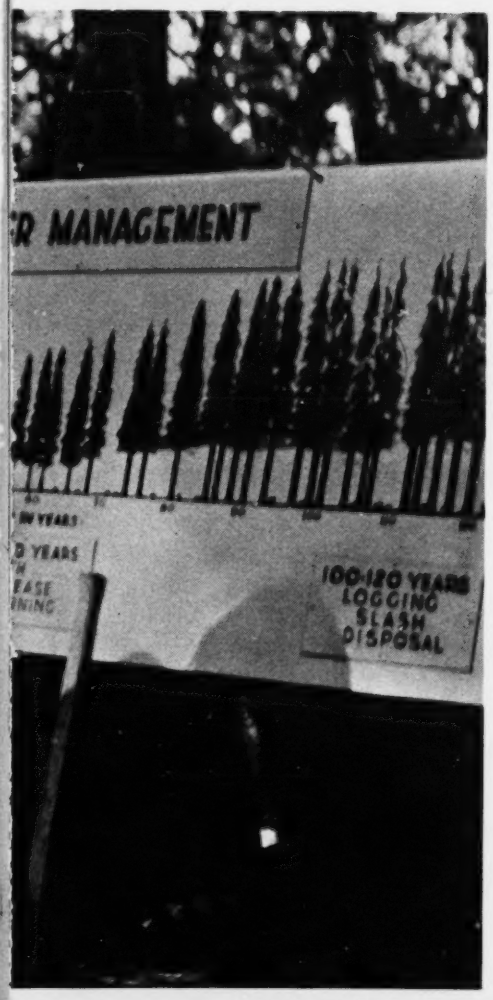
A young man who received his degree in parks and recreation just ten years ago is now Director of Parks for one of the larger counties in Oregon. He oversees 43 parks in Douglas County ranging from small waysides to the famous Salmon Harbor. Stretching from Diamond I ake in the east to Winchester Bay on the coast, Douglas County covers over 5,000 square miles and has a population of more than 70,000. The Director's responsibilities include supervising the existing parks and planning and developing new recreation areas. In addition, he coordinates a staff of over 20, including planners, clerical workers and maintenance crews and an additional ten part time employees. A welfare crew and a youth employment program is also used.

After graduating from the University of Oregon in 1958, he served for two years in the U. S. Army. He then took a position for two years as Director of Parks and Recreation for a small town in Idaho. In 1963 he moved to Roseburg as Park Director for the City. In 1966 he accepted the position as director for the county, which also has offices in Roseburg.

The Director encourages students interested in park and recreation administration to find summer jobs in this field. In this work, he says, "one must enjoy meeting and serving people and working long hours. But it can be rewarding, especially when you note the progress your Department is making and see the public using and enjoying the facilities you have helped to provide."



Outdoor Education and Interpretive Services



U.S. Forest Service Photo

Institutional

Organizing recreation activities for mentally retarded children and adults is the chief responsibility of the Recreation Director of Fairview Home for the retarded in Salem. "Recreation to the mentally retarded is fun, but most important, it serves as a method of preparation for community living," the Director points out. "We are attempting to offer the retarded a mode of leisure time expression by establishing programs that give them social, emotional, physical, and intellectual stimulation. Bowling leagues, swim classes, crafts programs, and many other activities teach them to help themselves."

The Director plans and supervises recreation programs, trains staff members for these programs, serves as a resource person for other agencies, lectures and teaches occasionally, manages programs budgets, and handles the public relations, records, and evaluates the programs.

She has a master's degree in special education from Portland State University, and a bachelor's degree in recreation from the University of Oregon.

Her position before going to Fairview was Director of Specialized Recreation in the Portland Bureau of Parks and Recreation.

While in school she had summer experience working in the Shriner's Hospital in San Francisco. In high school she was a volunteer swim instructor for the Easter Seal Society. She recommends that students who think they would like to work in specialized recreation volunteer to work with handicapped or retarded children. Until they try it, some people may not know if they have the patience or optimism required for such work.

But for the therapeutic recreation specialist, work with the retarded is continually rewarding. "We are trying constantly to keep up with them, for we don't know their potential," she said. "They can do things one would not view as feasible for the retarded. Since the field is new, there is the need to create, invent, and experiment. There is a lot the retarded can do if given the opportunity. Our job is to give them a chance and show them how to succeed."

Programs of Study

Recreation and park administration curricula at most colleges and universities combine broad liberal educations with the professional and technical studies essential for careers in specific areas of recreation. The programs include courses to provide a basic understanding of leisure and recreation in contemporary society and courses to develop basic program leadership skills as well as supervisory and organizational skills. Opportunities to learn and practice leadership and administrative skills are given through class and field experiences.

The park and recreation program may provide students with options, such as:

Park and Recreation Administration emphasis on management techniques, managerial problems, park and recreation organization and operation.

Recreation Leadership emphasis on leadership of recreation programs in community and youth centers, hospitals, institutions, playground, service clubs, the armed forces, industries, churches.

Voluntary Youth Agencies emphasis on working with youth, community leadership, and the role of recreation in the social structure of the community.

Camping and Outdoor Education emphasis on leadership skills to educate the public for appreciation and wise use of natural resources, camp administration, and coordinating outdoor programs with schools and agencies.

Landscape Architecture emphasis on planning outdoor areas, developing plans to enhance the environmental qualities, such as parks and gardens, scenic roads and housing projects, campuses, and country clubs.

Forestry and Resource Management emphasis on the protection and scientific management of natural resources, the relationship of resources and industries, and multiple use concepts.

Specific courses might include:

Recreation in Today's Society
History and Theory of Recreation
Camp Counseling
Recreation Leadership
Organization and Administration of Recreation
Administration of Youth Agencies
Recreation and Natural Resources
Principles of Outdoor Education
School and Community Recreation Programs
Camp Managment
Recreation and Park Facilities
Park Management
Forest Recreation Planning and Management
Philosophical Foundation of Recreation
Group Dynamics and Human Relations
Budget and Recreation Finance
Regional Park Administration
Research Methods

Students in recreation and park administration are encourged to gain some background in sociology, psychology, business administration, botany, horticulture, political science, philosophy, speech, education or public relations, depending on their interests and career goals.

High School Preparation

A logical starting point for your career in recreation is in high school. A well-rounded college preparatory program will give you good background for your higher education at a college or university. Participation in extra-curricular activities such as debate, drama, school publications, and athletics will broaden your social awareness and develop your personal poise and leadership ability. Volunteer work or summer jobs in scouting, church work, youth camps, Y programs or part-time work with park and recreation agencies will give you valuable leadership training. Most important, you must enjoy people.

Sources of Information

Junior or community colleges, private colleges or state universities give you a good liberal arts background for preparatory careers in recreation. For information on specific programs of study, admission, fees, and financial aid, write to the Director of Admissions of the institution of your choice and request the official catalog.

University of Oregon BS, BA, MS, MA, Ed.D, Ph.D. (Options: municipal park and recreation administration, community youth services, park management, recreation leadership, outdoor education, college union management, community arts administration). For information: Dr. Lynn S. Rodney, Head, Department of Recreation and Park Management, University of Oregon, Eugene 97403.

Oregon State University B.S. (Options: recreation education and forest recreation). For recreation education information: Dr. Edward Heath, Head, Recreation Education. For forest recreation information: Professor William N. Park, Forest Management Department, School of Forestry, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon 97331.

More information on park and recreation professions may be obtained by visiting a park or recreation agency in your city and by writing to

National Recreation and Park Association
1700 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20006

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